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The Boy Scout Song Leader's  
Manual

John Henry Lyons

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# The Boy Scout Song Leader's Manual

by

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## P R E F A C E

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This manual has been prepared to accompany the BOY SCOUT SONG BOOK. All directions contained herein have been made as simple as possible, in order to appeal to the boys themselves.

No attempt at symphonic or choral conducting has been made. Just enough of the technique of directing has been suggested to make it possible for anyone, possessed with qualities of leadership, to lead in the singing of the songs found in the BOY SCOUT SONG BOOK.

"In offering this new book to the field, the National Council believes it is making a vital and constructive contribution to the cause of Scouting. Group singing is a potent force for good-fellowship, happiness and high morale. The singing hour may do more than any other feature to bind scouts together and deepen their sense of loyalty to scout ideals." (From Introduction to BOY SCOUT SONG BOOK.)

The aim of the author has been to aid scout leaders, and help in the spread of the gospel of group singing.

## COMMUNITY MUSIC

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The value of community music is too apparent and well known to enter into any discussion in these pages. Community Service, Inc., in its excellent bulletin has summed up this subject in the following:

"Community music is a form of self-expression; is a medium for giving pleasure; is an "ice-breaker"; is an opportunity for physical relaxation; is a medium for giving enjoyable mental reactions; is a form of melodic cheering; is a good-fellowship medium; is a social welder; is an Americanizer; and is an emotional stimulant."

In his "Essentials in Conducting", Karl Gehrken says: "One of the fundamental reasons for group singing, is its beneficial effect upon the attitude of the people towards one another and toward their social group or their country. Through singing together in this informal way, each individual in the crowd is apt to be drawn closer to the others; to feel more interested in his neighbors; and in the case of "sings" where the dominant note is patriotism, to become imbued with a deeper spirit of loyalty to country.

In very many cases individuals who formerly would have nothing to do with one another have been drawn together, and have become really friendly, as the result of sitting together and singing together at a community "sing".

"The impulse to bring music into the lives of all the people is not a fad, but

is the result of the working out of a deep-seated and tremendously significant innate tendency - the instinct for self-expression; the same instinct which in another form is making us all feel that democracy is the only sure road to ultimate satisfaction and happiness."

Community singing is the first form of community music, and from this endeavor it is possible to branch out into the higher forms of the art. The "Sing" may be the medium for the development of musical appreciation, and expression of culture through the community chorus; community orchestra; community band; community pageant; and community opera.

The community "Sing", the song leader, his requirements, his training and technique, will be the subject of this manual.

## NEED OF A LEADER

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The necessity for a leader is not merely the waving of arms and directing. Upon his shoulders falls the selecting of the songs; determining of the pitch; indicating the rhythm and tempo; securing united attack and finish; creating an atmosphere; and a unanimous spirit.

The need of a leader for a sing is therefore obvious. No matter what kind of a gathering, or where assembled - in church, school, lodge, club, or whether it be just a group around the piano, some one must take the initiative. There must be a leader who will break up the formality and stiffness of the gathering. If

results are to be secured, the crowd must be led to forget themselves and their attitude toward their neighbors and toward singing.

It must be remembered that most people seldom have an opportunity to sing, except when they attend church. Judging by the average congregational singing, we wonder how many sing when they do go to church. A leader of any ability will have little difficulty getting people to sing songs of patriotism and sentiment, for no matter where they come from, people like to sing.

The difficulty arises - the leader. Fear, lack of confidence, ability and knowledge, prevent many a person from standing in front of his fellows and directing them, even though he may have the desire to do so. These may all be overcome with a little patience and diligent practice.

#### REQUISITES FOR LEADERSHIP

-----

The leader must be an enthusiast. He must be able to smile and to create an atmosphere of cheer and set people at ease, and raise an occasional party laugh. The magnetism of his personality must make people forget to wonder whether anyone is listening, forget their shyness and make folks sing who have not raised their voices in song for years.

There is no royal road to this result, and no one particular way to do it. Experienced song leaders, who know crowds and how to deal with them, use different methods and tactics with different groups. In



fact, it sometimes becomes necessary to handle the same crowd in a different manner and use other methods at different times. The point of the whole matter is that the leader, somehow, using all of his technique, ability and training, and the force of his personality, must loosen the crowd, break down the barrier of formality, make them forget themselves, and to enter whole-heartedly into the "Sing."

Bartholomew, in his "Music for Everybody", says:

"The song leader has two responsibilities: (1) To keep the singers together and help them to interpret the song properly;

(2) To enthuse the singers so that they will be eager to do their best."

The first task is one that may be mastered by study and practice. Anyone, if he follow the suggestions given here, will be able to master the technical difficulties. Having acquired that technical ability, and the knowledge of how to beat time, and what to do with his hands, any leader can keep a group of singers together in correct time and interpretation.

A song leader must possess a strong sense of rhythm and be able to feel the different measures and accents. He must be able to get his arms and hands into motion and indicate in a clear manner by the proper use and movement of his arms, just how fast or slow the song is to be sung, and how he wants it to go.

The second is not quite so easily mastered, for this requires that "something"

that will make a person want to sing in spite of himself. There are some yell leaders who can make a crowd do anything, while another yell leader, perhaps just as efficient, can get no response from that same crowd. That is called "personality".

If the leader is sure of himself, knows what to do with his hands, has his technique well in hand, and does not forget to smile (for that is the song leader's most valuable asset), the chances are that he has enough personality to "break the ice" and get the group singing.

## TECHNIQUE OF SONG LEADING

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BODY POSITION. The position of the body and the way a leader stands as he faces the audience, has much to do with the success of song leading. The head should be up, chest up, and shoulders back. An attitude of life and vigor on the part of the leader will react upon the audience.

Stand firmly upon both feet, with the right foot a step in front of the left. Throw the weight upon both feet, and the body muscles firm.

FOOT POSITION. The right foot should be a step in front of the left, and at right angles. The weight of the body should be upon both feet and the muscles firm. While the leader should not relax in his position, still he must have a certain looseness at the knees which will enable him to bend them slightly to bring out the rhythm. Any exaggerated movement of the

body should be discouraged, but at the same time the leader must feel the rhythm from his feet up.

ARM MOVEMENTS. It is necessary for the song leader to use a full arm movement from the shoulder. These movements should be well away from the body, so that they may be easily followed and understood, and seen from a distance. Little, stiff, jerky motions from the wrist or elbow do not encourage the average audience to sing.

RIGHT AND LEFT HANDS. Leading and directing is a language of signs. The song leader must learn to talk with his hands. All motions should be clearly made and easily understood by the singers. Wild and meaningless waving of the arms is not good directing and confuses those who are being directed. Proper use of the arms and hands is of utmost importance. There are certain movements for the beating of time that must be mastered. These must be practised until they become a fixed habit, or automatic.

The right hand is the time-beating hand, and marks the regular beat of the measure. That is why the leader of the band or orchestra or chorus holds the baton in this hand. The left hand is used to give special accents, holds, indicate expression and interpretation.

It is therefore necessary in community song leading to be as free in the use of the left hand as the right. In practising the movements suggested in this manual,

train both arms, first separately, then together, until the habit becomes fixed.

BEATING TIME. The first beat of the measure, in any kind of time, is the important beat. This first beat, no matter whether 2, 3, 4, 6, 9 or 12 beats in a measure, is the accented beat, and is always DOWN. The down beat of the measure must be accurate, vigorous, clear and distinct, like the driving of a nail.

The last beat of the measure, no matter what time the song is written in, is the weak beat, and must always be UP. Be sure of your first and last beats, and the other beats will take care of themselves.

BEGINNING ON LAST BEAT. When a song begins on the last beat of the measure it will be necessary to begin with a decided upward motion or "scoop" in order to have a good start. "America" begins on the "down" beat; "Star Spangled Banner" on the "up" beat, calling for a big upward motion.

2/4 or 2/2 TIME OR MEASURE. In beating two beats to the measure (the simplest rhythm in music), the general direction is, DOWN, UP. One or DOWN is about on a level with the elbow and out from the body. Two or UP brings the hand well up to the head, but does not pass in front of the face. Keep the wrist loose and flexible so that as "One" is reached, you may be able to give a little motion as though tapping a school teacher's bell. This might be called the "tap beat."

A few examples of songs in 2/4 time are the following: "Our Boys Will Shine"; "Old Zip Coon"; "Dixie"; "Yankee Doodle"; "Pack Up Your Troubles"; "Jingle Bells"; "In The Gloaming"; "Long Trail".

3/4, 3/2 or 3/8 MEASURE. The general direction for three beats in a measure is DOWN - first beat; OUT - second beat; UP - third beat, making a triangle. Any other way of beating three to a measure is incorrect. ONE is in front of the body and about on the level with the elbow; TWO is away from the body and to the side, still on the level with the elbow; THREE is up to the head.

Again use the "Tap Beat" for ONE and TWO, making a little "loop" after TWO and leading to THREE. Always remember that the important beat is the ONE or DOWN beat; give it a good, strong accent.

Examples of songs in 3/4 measure are: "Star Spangled Banner"; "America"; "Love's Old Sweet Song" (Chorus); "The Climate"; "Sweet Genevieve"; "My Bonnie"; "Santa Lucia".

4/4, 4/2 or 4/8, or COMMON MEASURE. The general direction for four beats in a measure is DOWN - first beat; IN - second beat; OUT - third beat; UP - fourth beat. In making beats "one", "two" and "three", have in mind an imaginary keyboard at the waistline, and keep these beats on a straight line.

Here again the importance of the DOWN beat must be remembered. Use a "tap beat"

for "one", "two" and "three", with a little "loop" after "three" and leading to "four".

Examples of songs in 4/4 measure are: "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean"; "America the Beautiful"; "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp"; "The Marseillaise"; "Old Folks at Home"; "Annie Laurie"; "Aloha Oe"; "Auld Lang Syne"; "Tenting Tonight"; "Battle Hymn of the Republic"; "Long, Long Ago".

6/8 MEASURE. This is the hardest kind of measure to beat, and may be directed in two different ways.

A study of the chart for 6/8 measure will show that beats "two" and "three" of the right hand, follow those of the left, before crossing over for "four". Beats "four" and "five" continue with a little "loop" after "five" and leading to "six". In moving from one position to another the wrist is flexible to allow the "tap beat" for each movement.

This is the kind of movement to use for such slow 6/8 measure songs as the following examples: "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms"; "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes"; "Silent Night".

In fast 6/8 measure songs the beating is exactly the same as in 2/4 measure, - "DOWN - UP". Examples of this kind of 6/8 measure are the following: "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow"; "Merry Life"; "Sailing"; "Yankee-Doodle-oodle"; "Nancy Lee"; "When Johnny Comes Marching Home".

9/8 and 12/8 MEASURE. The few songs written in this measure may be considered as

3-beat songs and 4-beat songs.  $9/8$  is Compound Triple Measure and is conducted on the same general plan as  $3/4$ .  $12/8$  is Compound Quadruple Measure and is conducted like  $4/4$ .

An example of  $12/8$  measure is "The Soldiers' Chorus", from "Faust".

In addition to time-beating there are a few additional movements for the song leader.

#### 1. POSITION.

The position assumed by the leader has a great deal to do with gaining the attention of the audience or group. It is absolutely necessary to secure this attention to get results from the start. In order to focus the attention upon him, the leader assumes this attitude:

Right foot forward, one step, at right angles with the left; weight of the body on the forward foot; chest out; both hands held up high; the whole body expressing alertness and vigor.

This is called "Position", and corresponds to the officer's command "Attention."

#### 2. HOLDS.

There are notes in every song to be held two, three or four rhythmic beats. The leader must signal just how long these tones are to be sustained. It is the leader's left hand that indicates such holds, while the right hand continues to beat time for the accompaniment. This is

needed in such passages as in "Old Folks at Home", on the end of the phrase just preceding the chorus; in "America", on the word "sing" of the phrase "Of Thee I Sing", where there is danger of breathing in too soon.

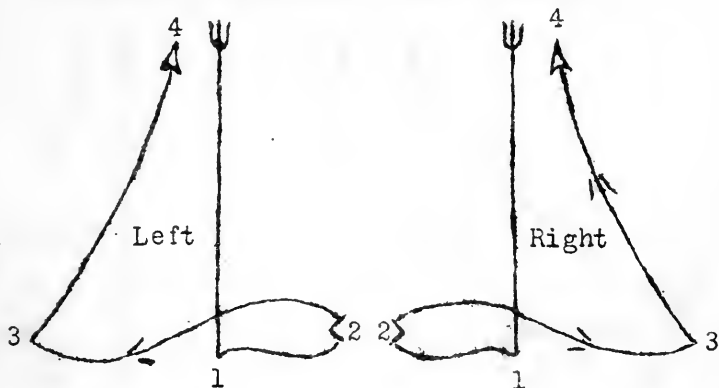
There is another kind of "hold" which needs a signal from the leader in order that the crowd may be kept together. When there is a place in the song calling for an unrhythmic or indefinite sustaining tone, that is indicated to singers and accompaniment by a posture very similar to "Position". Both hands up, right foot forward, weight on right foot, the entire body expressing the word "hold". This is a very clear signal to all, that the tone is to be sustained until another signal to stop is given.

### 3. "STOP".

After an indefinite hold, or at the close of the phrase or song, there must be a signal to indicate that all sound cease. The best movement to indicate this is a quick downward movement of both arms, bringing them together on the chest. This tells very definitely that the leader desires silence until he resumes the beat.



# MOVEMENT FOR FOUR BEATS IN A MEASURE



"One"



"Two"

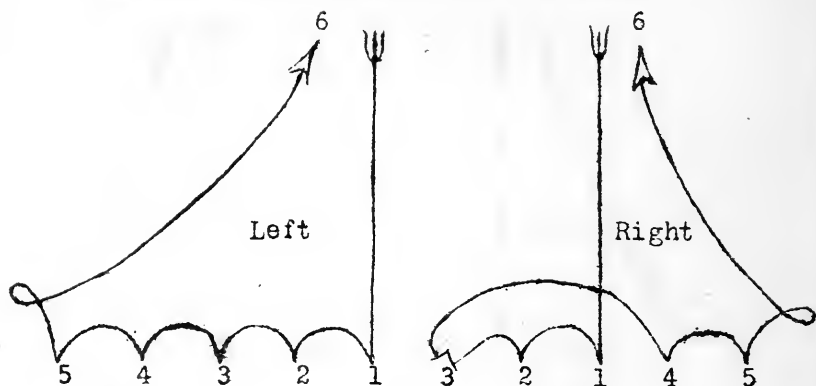


"Three"



"Four"

# MOVEMENT FOR SIX BEATS IN A MEASURE



"One"



"Two"



"Three"



"Four"

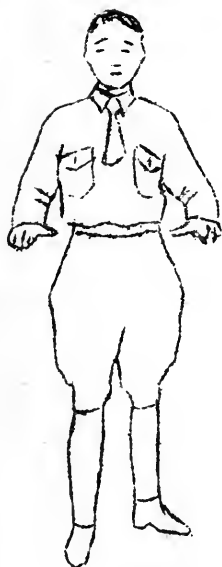
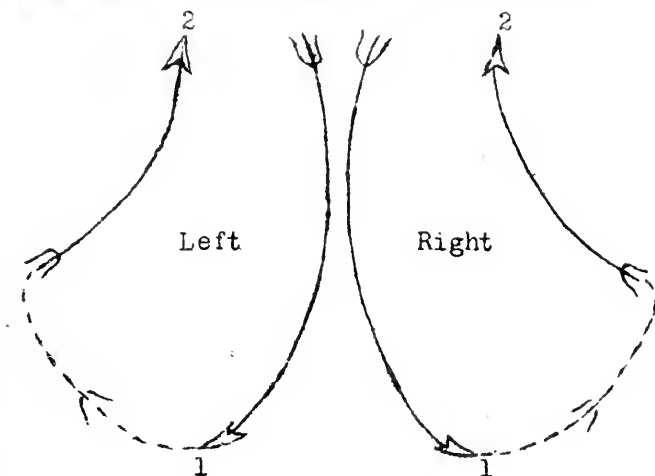


"Five"



"Six"

MOVEMENT FOR TWO BEATS IN A MEASURE

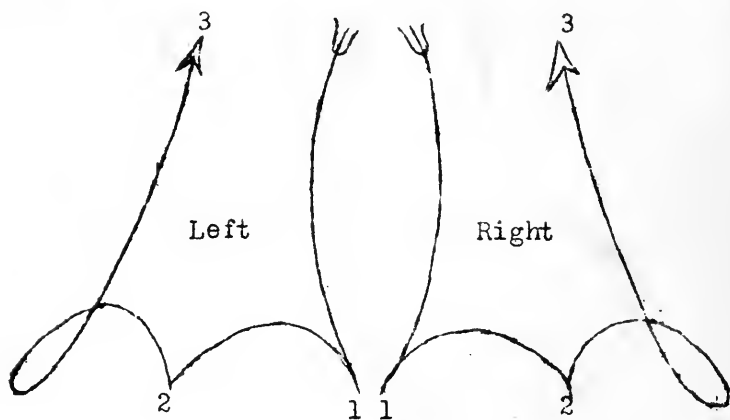


"One"



"Two"

MOVEMENT FOR THREE BEATS IN A MEASURE



"One"



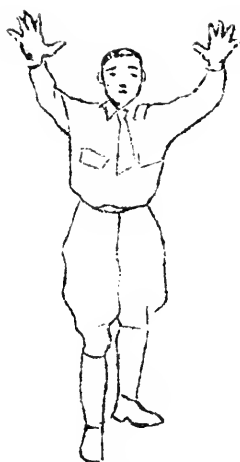
"Two"



"Three"



"POSITION"



"HOLD"



"STOP"



"HOLD"

## ACCOMPANIST.

So much depends upon the accompaniment that a word must be said in this connection.

Blessed is that leader who has an accompanist of adequate technique and reading ability, and doubly blessed if that accompanist is able to follow his beat. But thrice blessed if that accompanist in addition to his knowledge of the classics also knows our standard patriotic and folk songs.

The most important item is that of perfect sympathy and understanding between leader and accompanist. Here there must be a fine example of team-work. All plans should be complete, the program, songs, music, key and tempo, should be clearly understood before appearing before the audience. After the leader is once on the platform, avoid all conversation and confusion. When the song is announced the proper introduction should be played and the song started immediately.

## STARTING A SONG: COMMANDS.

The attack, the first note, the first word in a song must be a united one. For that purpose a signal or command is necessary in beginning a song. Some leaders count a measure aloud for the singers. But for the average group, a command must also be an invitation, and at the same time set the tempo of the song. The value of the command must not be overlooked.

All commands should be given in a clear voice, sounding the first tone of the song, if necessary, and in perfect rhythm. This will establish the tempo and

pitch of the song. The leader who has no accompanist will find much use for such a command.

The examples of such commands are the following:

"Ready, Sing" - for a two-word or two-beat measure;

"Every - Body - Sing" for a three-word or three beat measure;

"Ready, Every, Body, Sing" - for a four word or four beat measure.

Fill out the measure with one of these commands to suit the number of beats in the song, so that the word "sing" will come immediately before the first note. "Sing" corresponds to the officer's command "March".

### INTRODUCTIONS.

Some leaders prefer just a chord from the accompanist, or a measure or two for a short prelude, just enough to establish the pitch. The most satisfactory introduction, at least generally accepted as best, includes the last four measures, or the last phrase of the song or chorus. This leads immediately into the song without the loss of a single beat, or a break in the rhythm.

When the accompanist reaches the next to the last measure of the introduction, the leader assumes the posture of "Position." Simultaneously with the last note of the introduction the first word of the command is given.

For example, "America", the introduction would be the last four measures.



("From every mountain side, Let freedom ring") On the word "Let", assume "Position". And on the word "ring", the command, "Every, Body, Sing" - three word command is given. This fills up the last measure of the introduction, and swings into the first verse without losing a beat. The last word of the command "Sing" immediately precedes the first word "My".

## HOW TO LEAD OUR PATRIOTIC STANDARD AND FOLK SONGS

### "STAR SPANGLED BANNER"

There has been much discussion regarding the range of our national anthem. Some have suggested lowering the pitch to the key of A or Ab. For the ordinary crowd of adults the original key - Bb - is the practical key. There are but a few high tones, and the average audience can be led to reach them.

Introduction is the last four measures and one beat - (O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave).

Assume "Position" on first note of next to last measure. On last note of introduction - (brave) start two-word command "Ready, SING".

Begin on third or up beat.

After the words "gleaming" and "streaming", a short break, about a half beat. The words "red glare" and "in air" are alike. Ritard and bring out the

phrase "that our flag was still there."  
A hold and a "Stop" after "wave"; also a  
hold on "free". The words "and the" are  
Bb and C (do - re). The second stanza is  
usually omitted for obvious reasons.

### "AMERICA"

The standard key is G. Introduction  
last four measures. Assume "Position" on  
first note of next to last measure, and  
on last note of Introduction ("ring")  
start three-word command, "Every, Body,  
Sing." Hold the word "Sing" three beats.  
The next to the last measure has two  
eighth notes for the first beat.

The first half of the last stanza is  
the "prayer"; sing it softly. Indicate  
to the singers by smaller movements. On  
the words, "Long may our land", come out  
with a big climax; use big movements.  
Beat three to each measure. Begins on  
DOWN beat.

### "COLUMBIA, THE GEM OF THE OCEAN"

Key of Ab. Introduction last four  
measures and one beat. Assume "Position"  
on first notes of next to last measure,  
and last note of introduction ("blue")  
start three-word command, "Every, Body,  
SING." Begin on four or UP beat. Beat  
four to each measure.

### "AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL"

One of the finest of our patriotic  
songs. Standard key is C. Introduction

last four measures and one beat. Assume "Position" on first note of next to last measure. On last note of Introduction start three-word command, "Every, Body, SING." Begin on four or UP beat. Bring out the words, "America, America". Beat four to each measure.

### "BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC"

Key of Bb. Four beats to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" on first note of next to last measure. On last note of introduction start four-word command, "Ready, Every, Body, SING". The first word "Mine" must be sung very quickly; a snappy UP beat is necessary.

All verses are good, but always sing verses one and three. Make the chorus big and triumphant. As a special effect, have the first "Glory Hallelujah" sung softly, the second time, louder, and the third time, very loud, with a climax on the words "His truth is marching on."

### "TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP"

Key of Bb, and "Battle Cry of Freedom", Key of Ab, are two inspiring patriotic songs, full of rhythm and melody.

The text is appropriate for today. The introductions, commands and beating are the same as in "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" and "America the Beautiful".

## "DIXIE"

Key of C. Is always a favorite. This rollicking tune has a new set of appropriate words "The U.S.A. For Ever".

Introduction last four measures and one half beat. Assume "Position" on first note of next to last measure. On last note of introduction start command "Ready, SING"

The first word "I" is sung quickly and demands a rapid up beat. Beat two to each measure.

## "TENTING TONIGHT"

Key of Bb; presents a picture of the most pathetic side of war; is regarded as a splendid peace song today.

Introduction last four measures. Command and beating, same as "America the Beautiful."

## "ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT"

Is a type of the early folk-song and originated in Salem. Key of Ab.

Beat four to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" on next to last measure. On last note of introduction start four word command - "Ready, Every, Body, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

### "AULD LANG SYNE"

Is best sung with four beats in a measure and in the key of F.

Introduction last four measures and one beat. Assume "Position" on next to last measure. On last note of introduction start three word command "Every, Body, SING". Begins on UP beat.

### "BELIEVE ME, IF ALL THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS"

A melody of charm and appeal. Key of Eb, and six beats to each measure.

Introduction last four measures and one beat. Assume "Position" on next to last measure. Command, "Ready, SING". Begins on UP beat.

### "ANNIE LAURIE"

An ever-popular Scotch song.. Key of C. Beat four to each measure. Introduction last four measures and one beat. Assume "Position" on next to last measure, starting command on last note - "Every, Body, SING". Begins on UP beat.

### "DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES"

A melody of the Elizabethan period. Key of Eb, six beats to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" on next to last measure, on

last note give command "Every, Body, SING". Begins on the DOWN beat.

### "FLOW GENTLY SWEET AFTON"

A well known tune applied to Burns' poem. Key of A; beat three to each measure. Introduction last four measures and one beat. Assume "Position" on next to last measure, and last note give command - "Ready, SING". Begins on UP beat.

### "GOOD-BYE, MY LOVER, GOOD-BYE"

Is a popular song of a decade ago. Key of G, 6/8 time. Beat two beats to each measure.

The first six measures of the chorus are in 4/4 time; beat four beats to these measures. The last two measures of the chorus return to 6/8; beat two beats. Ritard last two measures. Introduction last two measures and one beat. Assume "Position" immediately. Start command on last note - "Ready, SING". A quick UP beat for the first word "The".

### "JUANITA"

Of Spanish origin; best sung in key of Eb. Beat three beats to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume command next to last measure; on last note start command, "Every, Body, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

## "MASSA'S IN THE COLD, COLD GROUND"

Key of D. Beat four to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" next to last measure, and on last note start command, "Ready, Every, Body, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

Hold the note in the eighth measure four full beats. To be sure that the singers do not break in ahead of time, say aloud the words, "Same tune" on beats three and four. The measure would be thus: "One, Two, Same, Tune". This will prevent any singer from jumping into the chorus.

## "MY BONNIE"

A fine community song. Written in Bb, and in 3/4 measure.

Because of the tempo, which should be fast to get good results, it will be wise to beat one beat to each measure. The second and the fourth measure of the chorus are the same, - Bb. "HOLD" on the last "Ering back" of the chorus.

Introduction last eight measures. Assume "Position next to last measure. Command, "Ready, SING". Quick UP beat for first word "My".

## "MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME"

Key of G. Shout aloud "Same tune" in the eighth measure to prevent singers from

breaking ahead. This will indicate the repeat of the music. Beat four beats to each measure. Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" on next to last measure. On last note start command "Ready, Every, Body, SING". A quick UP beat for the first word "The."

### "OLD BLACK JOE"

Is always a favorite. Considerable freedom is allowed in the chorus. A special effect may be obtained by having certain groups echo in the chorus.

Key of D, written in 4/4 measure. The best results will be secured by beating eight beats to each measure, or dividing each measure into two parts, four beats each.

Introduction last two measures and one half beat. Assume "Position" on next to last measure, on last note start command - "Ready, Every, Body, SING". Begins on DOWN beat of the measure.

### "OLD FOLKS AT HOME"

Is the correct title - not "Swanee River". The best key is D, and four beats to each measure. The tendency in the eighth measure will be to go on to the chorus. Saying aloud, "SAME TUNE" will make the singers repeat, and not go on to the chorus, as in other southern melodies. Introduction last four measures. Assume



"Position" on next to last measure. On last note start command "Ready, Every, Eody, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

### "SANTA LUCIA"

(Lu-che-a). Best sung in Key of C, and three beats to each measure.

Introduction last four measures. Assume "Position" on next to last measure, and start command on last note - "Every, Body, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

### "LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG"

Contains the great element to make a good community song - expression, feeling of kindness and brotherhood.

Written in the key of F, the verse with four beats to each measure and the chorus with three. The HOLDS throughout the song need careful directing. The introduction should be the first four measures, but wherever possible use the introduction that belongs to the song.

Assume "Position on next to last measure, and on last note start command - "Ready, Every, Eody, SING". Begins on DOWN beat.

### "WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG"

A song that never fails to gain a great response among the adults. Written

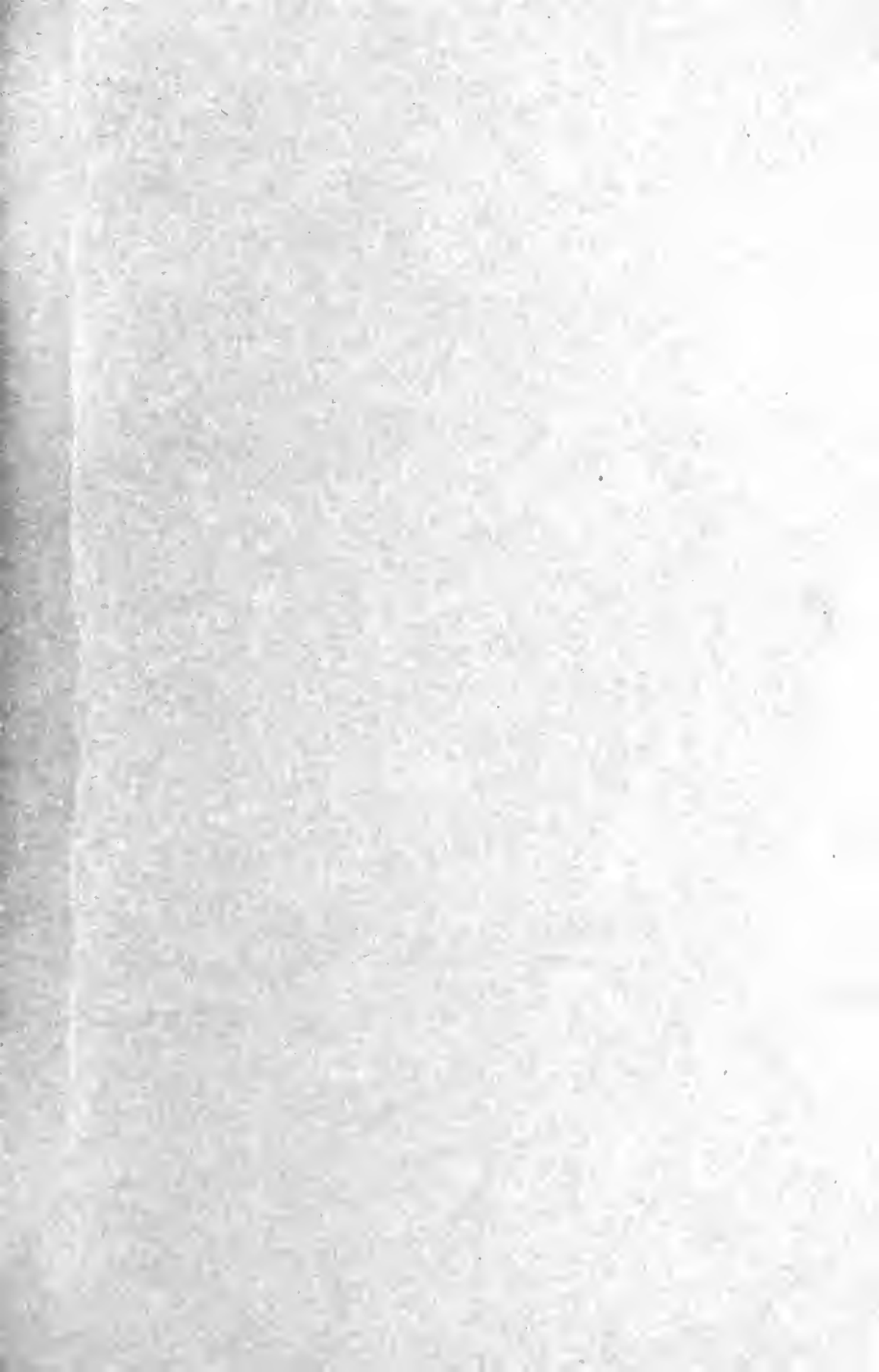
in the key of F, and four beats to each measure. · Introduction last four measures and one beat.

Assume "Position" on next to last measure, and on last note start command - "Every, Body, SING". Begins on UP beat.

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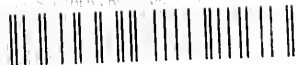
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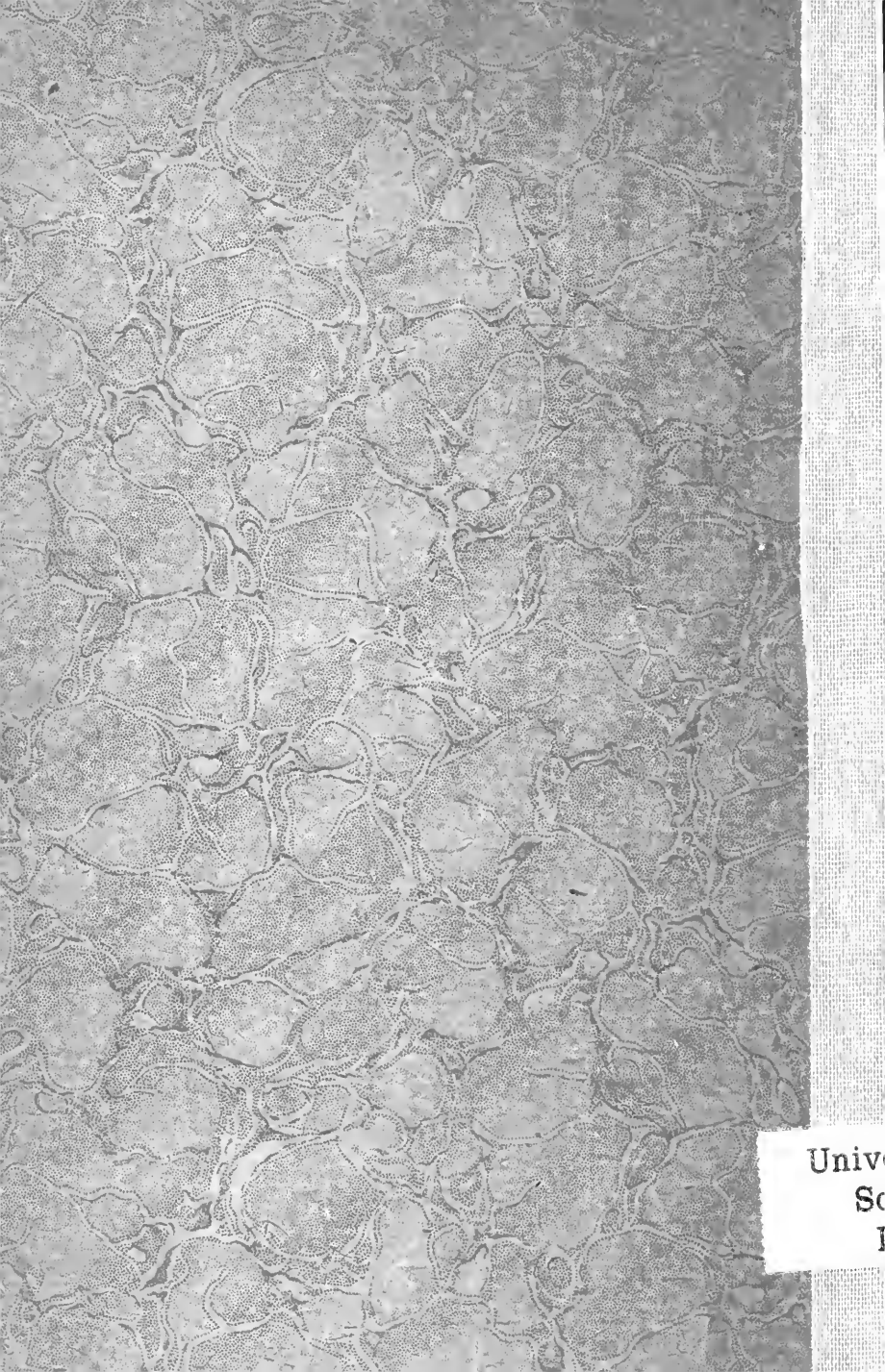
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